

IN THE CLAIMS:

1-36. (Canceled)

37. (New) A low-acid not from concentrate (NFC) juice prepared by:

providing an initial single strength juice flow having suspended solids and a known brix;

diverting from the initial single strength juice flow a first portion of the single strength juice from a second portion of the single strength juice;

separating out the suspended solids from the first portion of the single strength juice to provide a solids-reduced single strength juice having not greater than about 3 volume percent suspended solids based upon the total volume of the solids-reduced single strength juice;

providing an ion-exchange column having a lower volume portion filled with ion-adsorbing resin beads and having an upper volume portion within which the resin beads are not present, the lower volume portion having an exit port, a first inlet port opening into the upper volume portion at an upper location spaced a given distance above the resin beads, and a second inlet port opening into the upper volume portion at a lower location which is spaced a distance above the resin beads which is less than

said given distance;

introducing water into the resin column;

draining a fraction of the water from the column through the exit port to create a head space in the column above the resin beads;

introducing the solids-reduced single strength juice into the resin column through the second inlet port and into the head space;

introducing the solids-reduced single strength juice into the resin column through the first inlet port;

draining water through the exit port until the brix of the outflowing treated liquid exceeds a pre-determined minimum value relative to the brix of the initial citrus juice flow;

continuing to introduce solids-reduced single strength juice through the first inlet port and directing treated liquid to production of deacidified single strength juice;

removing treated single strength NFC juice from the resin column so as to create a head space in the column;

introducing water through the second inlet port and into the head space in the column;

introducing water through the first inlet port and passing liquid through the exit port until the brix of the outflowing liquid drops below a pre-determined value, at which time treated liquid is no longer directed to production; and

combining the deacidified single strength juice from the ion-exchange column with said second portion of the single strength juice flow and with the separated suspended solids to achieve a final blend, which is a low-acid single strength juice.

38. (New) The low-acid NFC juice according to claim 37, said juice being a low-acid NFC orange juice having a titratable acidity of not greater than about 0.6 weight percent.

39. (New) The low-acid NFC juice according to claim 37, said juice being a low-acid citrus juice having an acidity lower than that of the initial single strength juice flow.

40. (New) A low-acid not from concentrate juice prepared by: providing an initial single strength juice flow having suspended solids and a known standard of identity (SOI);

diverting from the initial single strength juice flow a first portion of the juice from a second portion of the juice;

separating out the suspended solids from said first portion juice to provide a solids-reduced single strength juice having not greater than about 3 volume percent suspended solids based upon the total volume of the solids-reduced single strength juice;

providing an ion-exchange column having a lower volume portion filled with ion-adsorbing resin beads and having an upper

volume portion within which the resin beads are not present, the lower volume portion having an exit port;

introducing water into the resin column;

draining a fraction of the water from the column through the exit port to create a head space in the column above the resin beads;

introducing the solids-reduced single strength juice into the resin column into the head space;

draining water through the exit port until the SOI of the outflowing treated liquid meets or exceeds the known SOI of the single strength juice;

continuing to introduce solids-reduced juice and directing treated liquid to production of deacidified single strength juice;

removing treated single strength juice from the resin column so as to create a head space in the column;

introducing water into the head space in the column and passing liquid through the exit port until the outflowing liquid has an SOI which does not meet or exceed the known SOI, at which time treated liquid is no longer directed to production; and

combining the deacidified single strength juice from the ion-exchange column with said second portion juice flow and with the separated suspended solids to achieve a final blend, which is a low-acid single strength juice.

41. (New) The low-acid NFC juice according to claim 40, said juice being a low-acid NFC orange juice having a titratable acidity of not greater than about 0.6 weight percent.

42. (New) The low-acid NFC juice according to claim 40, said juice being a low-acid citrus juice having an acidity lower than that of the initial single strength juice flow.